

# Enshallah

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In the quiet darkness, the softly glowing hands on President Bill Grady's Rolex pointed to 3:56 when the phone next to it on the nightstand began beeping.

He exhaled sharply and grabbed the handset.

"Hello."

"Bill, we're under attack," said National Security Advisor Harold K. Simonson. "We need you in the Situation Room right now."

Other members of the National Security Council were arriving and taking their seats around the long table, when Grady swept in wearing a dark purple robe.

"What's going on?" he asked Secretary of State Rhonda Canfield who was studying a bizarre scene on her laptop.

"Bill, they pulverized it. It's gone," she said.

"What's gone!" Grady snapped.

"The Reagan Presidential Library! Look!"

A screen descended from the ceiling at the end of the room, locked into place, and immediately displayed the image that was on Canfield's laptop. Where the stately library once stood was a mounded pile of debris with wisps of dust rising here and there. Pieces glistened under the brilliant flood lights that had been erected by security personnel.

The president sank into his leather chair and took the coffee offered by an aid. "Do we know who did it?"

"Mouradipour," replied Vice President Charles Dodd, referring to the president of Iran.

"We're thinking they used the library to make a point," added Director of National Intelligence Matt N. Jenson.

"What point?" said Grady.

"They wanted us to know what they're capable of," said the vice president.

"What's our response, Mark?" asked the president, turning to Mark Mixon, chairman of the joint chiefs.

"It won't be easy, Mr. President," he replied evenly.

"What's easy, Mark?"

"But this is different, Mr. President," Mixon said .

"Let's launch some stealths and get 'em."

"We've already lost a squadron plus two, Bill," said Secretary of Defense Gordon N. Reynolds.

"What do you mean 'lost'?"

"Pulverized, Bill. There one minute, shattered the next." Grady sat silently, not comprehending, as if Reynolds were speaking French.

"We've never seen it before, Bill," Reynolds went on, studying the stunned president whose right hand rose to cup his chin. The color drained from his face, pushed out by a looming reality.

"Initially, we scrambled two fighters at a little after midnight," Reynolds said, "to intercept an unknown jet approaching the West Coast. They made contact at 12:17 a.m. and were warned to back off or be destroyed. The intruder's pilot spoke perfect English and said he was from the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"Our guys repeated the warning, were ignored, and loosed a brace of air-to-air missiles, following policy," Mixon said, "ground control at Edwards heard screams; then nothing."

"Man!" The president said, his eyes wide.

"No further contact?" asked the vice president.

"There was a cloud of debris," said Mixon. "Then it all fell into the sea and off radar. Next we sent an entire squadron of Raptors, but they vanished, too, just like the first jets."

"We didn't know exactly what happened until the Iranian got closer to the coast," Reynolds added. "A bunch of SAMs were launched and our controllers could see each of them disintegrate when it got within a half mile."

Jenson explained, "Evidently the Iranians have developed some sort of force-field-ray that shatters anything it touches."

"As the jet approached the Reagan Library," said Mixon, "it radioed a warning to evacuate the building—the Iranian gave us 15 minutes."

"At that time in the morning, there were just a few security and custodial people there, and we got 'em out," Canfield said.

"Good," the president said.

Mixon continued, "Exactly one-half hour after the warning, the Iranian fighter—which we know was a type of jet the Iranians call Azarakhsh, meaning thunderbolt or lightning in Farsi—swooped in from the east. We had a couple of F-35s up there watching."

Reynolds picked up the story. "Our pilots were turning giant circles centered on the library from a couple of miles away when the building was bathed in a crimson-colored ray emitted by the Azarakhsh. Soon the entire complex began to glow and then it just disintegrated into millions of pieces."

"Here's an e-mail from Javad Zarif," Canfield interjected.

"Who's that?" Grady said, staring at the strangely glittering pile on the screen as workers in shiny blue hazmat suits arrived and began taking samples.

"He's the Iranian ambassador to the UN, Bill," answered Dodd.

Canfield started reading the e-mail as Mixon picked up the story. "The Iranian took off like a shot after the library was destroyed, heading due west."

"Might makes right," Canfield read softly to herself as she continued perusing the e-mail.

"What do you mean by that?" said Grady.

"Give me a minute, Bill."

Hadley snapped his cell phone shut and reported: "Our people on the ground at the library say that anything in or near the structure was obliterated. They haven't found a piece bigger than a jelly bean."

"We can't let 'em get away with this, Mixon," Grady said. "What if we fire some cruises at Tehran?"

"Their force-field-ray seems to have no problem destroying missiles," Dodd said.

"Don't we have a ray like theirs?"

"We're working on some things," Mr. President, said Mixon. "But so far our rays are only effective short range and then only against personnel. They can nudge people out of an area by making things uncomfortable but not disable them; they certainly can't pulverize matter. We don't have anything close to what the Iranians evidently have."

"This puts us at Iran's mercy, doesn't it, Mark?" Dodd said looking the joint chief squarely in the eyes. Mixon met the VP's gaze but said nothing.

Canfield interrupted. "Oh, my, listen to this!" She read aloud: "And for their crimes against Muslims around the world, but particularly in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine, the Islamic Republic of Iran demands that President Bill V. Grady and Vice President Charles R. Dodd be handed over to Iranian authorities at Reagan National Airport for extradition to the Republic and trial as criminals of war."

"What kind of outrage is that!" Grady shouted. "I'm no war criminal—*they're* the criminals!" Dodd sat quietly, looking at the grain in the walnut table, his life passing by his eyes at the speed of light.

Canfield raised her voice slightly. "The Republic gives the United States seven days to surrender war criminals Grady and Dodd or it will be forced to begin destroying American population centers, one by one, until they are handed over. Attacks on our Azarakhshs or on the Republic will result in the deaths of your servicemen and -women and the destruction of your obsolete equipment."

Canfield stopped reading and the room fell still as stone.

Chief of Staff to the President Barry Jepson looked at Grady who was staring into space. Finally, Jepson asked, "What are we going to do, Mr. President?"

Before Grady could answer, Canfield said, "Bill, we have to get Nelson and Howard over here."

"Yeah, Rhonda," Grady drawled, subdued. "Let's break for now and reconvene in 30 minutes; make sure they're here."

White House Press Secretary Patricia N. Dodson was waiting outside the conference room when the doors swung open and Council members began exiting. She approached Jepson who was watching for her.

"What's happening, sir," said Dodson, matching his pace, following by his side.

"What have you heard, Pat?"

"All the nets have breaking news about the Reagan Library," she said. "Bin Laden, sir?"

"Come to my office."

He hurried along with Dodson making strides as big and fast as his. After his office door slammed and the two sat around his desk, Jepson said, "What's the press saying?"

"Terrorist attack, one jet, speculation that some U.S. military craft were destroyed, too."

"It was Iran. They've got a ray that fragmentizes anything it touches; picked the library to make a point. Media have any idea who's behind this?"

"No," said Dodson. "Nothing from the terrorists."

"Let's keep it that way."

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About 6,300 miles to the east, Aref Zaribafan was seated in a Tehran auditorium between his welder father and housewife mother. He was medium height and slender, only 21.

At the lectern, President Asad Mouradipour greeted the crowd of Iranian religious, government, and business leaders and the television audience of Iranians and others around the world.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Allah be praised. Our prayers have been answered!"

Giant screens came alive with images of the Reagan Library disintegrating.

He explained the Azarakhsh's successful mission and the ultimatum to a stunned audience that applauded and chanted: "God is great! God is great! God is great!"

Shouting into the microphone over the audience's jubilation, he asked Aref Zaribafan to stand.

Zaribafan rose slowly and peered around the room shyly, his thin beard barely covering his cheeks. No one would mistake him for a super genius, a once-a-millennium thinker who had advanced the understanding of physics more than Newton and Einstein combined.

"The magnificent events that we have witnessed today, events that have returned Iran to its rightful place as the most powerful nation on Earth are due to this gift of Allah, this brilliant young man, Aref Zaribafan! He invented the Enshallah force field and ray at the tender age of 19."

The crowd gave Aref a long and thunderous standing ovation.

In homes and businesses around the world, people stared at screens as the seat of global power, for decades occupied by the US, shifted dramatically. No event had so captured the attention of Earthlings since the World Trade Center was brought down on September 11, 2001.

Now more than 50 million Americans and hundreds of millions of viewers in other nations watched as Mouradipour concluded: "Two more points. First, oppressors of Muslims, from the jungles of Indonesia to the frontiers of Russia, beware. Soon you will be in our sights. Free our people or face devastating coercion. Second, along with trying Grady and

Dodd, we will begin systematically destroying every nuclear weapon on Earth, eliminating a horrid threat that has hung over our heads for almost 70 years."

Just as Mouradipour was about to finish, a military officer ran across the stage and whispered in his ear.

Facing the audience again, Mouradipour smiled and announced: "Air Force Brigadier General Ahmad Mighani informs me that within the past 15 minutes our defensive shield has intercepted and destroyed six missiles launched from Israel. Others bearing down on us will be destroyed momentarily. Allah be praised!"

"Allah be praised!" the crowd roared.

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"There's no way we're going to hand over Bill and Charles," said Counsel to the President George Glider when the Security Council reconvened, Speaker of the House Polly Nelson and Senate Majority Leader Roger Howard now present. "No way."

"Well, no offense, gentlemen, but just how many Americans do you think you're worth?" queried Nelson.

"Polly, how can you talk like that?" Fielding said.

"She's being realistic, Fred," Howard said. "We've seen what the Iranians are capable of and understand their ultimatum."

"C'mon, Polly!" the president practically yelled, "You're thinking of giving in to their demands and sacrificing us? You might be next you know!"

"I voted against you on Iraq, Bill," Nelson pointed out.

"Yeah, but how many pro-Israel votes have you cast?" Grady shot back. "They're going to look at you, too!"

Howard, who voted for the Iraq War, interjected calmly. "Just what choice do we have? We can't let them kill Americans by the thousands just to save our own skins."

Grady contemplated this possibility, doubt wrinkling his usual optimism. "Mark, are you sure there isn't anything we can do militarily? No more options?"

"None, Bill," Nixon replied. "The Israelis sent a flock of missiles that were rebuffed quickly and effortlessly by Iran's force field. They have a very powerful technology that they call *Enshallah*, which means 'If Allah wills.'"

"Public opinion seems to be on the side of not giving into their demands," said Jepson. "White House operators say calls are flooding in and are totally in support of fighting the Iranians."

"Brave talk until their town is devastated," Nelson said. "We're going to need to convene a joint session of Congress and take an emergency vote. What else can we do?"

In Manhattan, the US delegation requested a special session of the United Nations General Assembly but found no sympathy there. Even NATO members distanced themselves from the United States.

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Azarakhsh jets left Iran tailed by fuel tankers and zoomed toward the nuclear powers of the world, beginning with Israel. Over each nation, Iranian Air Force personnel radioed for a list of facilities where nuclear warheads were stored or manufactured. Iranian intelligence had counts and locations so keeping governments honest wasn't hard. Resistance was met by warnings that a major sports arena or stadium would be reduced to rubble and some were before compliance occurred. Soon nuclear arsenals from Britain to Russia to South Africa to the US were eliminated.

One unexpected consequence of the crystallization process the Iranians subjected targets to was the burnable fuel it produced. The ray and force field discovered by Aref Zaribafan stripped materials of toxic by-products and rendered them no more harmful to burn than hardwoods such as oak.

Plutonium, uranium, and other radioactive materials were transformed. Iranian energy proponents hailed the new technology as a way to deal with waste generated by nuclear power plants.

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The emergency joint session of Congress debated Iran's threat and voted overwhelmingly in favor of telling the Iranians as the headline in the *New York Post* declared: "Congress To Iran: Go To Hell!"

"We have their answer, Mr. President," said Abdullah Karbaschi, military aide to Asad Mouradipour.

"Yes," replied Mouradipour striding to a window overlooking acres of flowers. "It's a stupid game of chess and they haven't realized that they're mated—there's nowhere to turn. Their arrogance continues even though their corrupt reign is over."

Mouradipour approved Phase II of a plan the Iranian military dubbed "Getting Grady" and soon Ambassador Zarif sent an e-mail to Canfield:

"Most Honorable Secretary of State Canfield,

"It is unfortunate that the United States has elected to protect War Criminals Grady and Dodd.

"Please warn Attica Prison and Sing Sing Prison to evacuate their premises by tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. eastern standard time.

"Both will be granulated as further demonstrations of our power."

Over the next few days, a total of six federal prisons were obliterated, sending officials scrambling to house inmates.

The next message from Mouradipour lamented that the prisons' destruction did not have sufficient impact on American resolve and concluded: "With great regret, tomorrow we will dispatch a multitude of Americans and then on each subsequent day another multitude until Grady and Dodd are aboard an Iranian jetliner bound for the Republic."

The next morning, a Sunday, Azarakhshs zoomed into US air space from all cardinal points after the Iranians received no answer. Services had just begun at Riveroak Church in Dallas where more than 10,000 had congregated in an arena to hear Pastor Oliver Johnson. Just after he asked parishioners to join him in praying that Jesus raise his mighty sword and

vanquish the Iranian threat, the building began to glow. The screams were hideous until the structure and everything in it was reduced to a pile of glittering particles.

That afternoon, President Bill Grady, with Vice President Dodd standing to his right, addressed the nation from the Oval Office: "Ladies and gentleman, my fellow Americans, the latest "murderous action by Iran demonstrates that Mouradipour will stop at nothing. Vice President Dodd and I cannot permit this to happen again. Tonight we will board an Iranian plane for transport to Iran."

Although he made it sound as if the decision was his, there had been a great deal of behind-the-scenes pressure from governors, representatives, senators, and other government, business, and religious leaders.

"We are innocent and firmly believe if the Iranian system of justice is like ours, we will be vindicated and returned to America."

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"Son, you'll have the best lawyers money can buy," said President Grady's father just before the ex-president and ex-vice president boarded the Iranian military transport jet in handcuffs for the flight to Iran.

Wives Jenny and Jody and mother Grace Grady cried and their tears were broadcast by Al Jazeera, evoking empathy if not sympathy among women who had lost husbands or sons in wars or skirmishes against American power. President Nelson had wished the pair well but was not at the airport.

When the converted cargo jet lifted into the clear, blue sky, Grady and Dodd, who sat blindfolded, gagged, handcuffed, and shackled on the floor in specially constructed cells at the back of the plane, were approached by Iranian Commander of Police Esmail Ahmadi Moghaddam.

"Prisoners," he began, "you are both guilty of massive crimes against humanity and soon will face trial in Tehran. The proceedings will be broadcast live worldwide and viewed by hundreds of millions.

"In Iraq alone our intelligence estimates that more than 100,000 Muslims died because of you. Many were involved in the military but tens of thousands of innocent civilians, men, women, and children—ordinary people—were murdered, too. Even more were maimed and disabled by your illicit crusade.

"When you are found guilty, you will be hung, and your remains will be left on the desert to be devoured by vultures. Your miserable fates will serve as warnings to others who would use power wantonly.

"You may save yourselves some pain and humiliation by pleading guilty.

"Otherwise, rest assured, we will elicit a guilty plea by applying the torture methods you approved for use against Muslims." A pair of Azarakhsh jets led the way and another pair guarded the prison plane's tail. Just then Aref Zaribafan woke with a start on a bench in Tehran's Saeed Park.

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